

Little Dolphins Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	309736
Inspection date	04 June 2007
Inspector	Janet, Elizabeth Singleton
Setting Address	Dolphinholme C of E Primary, Dolphinholme, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA2 9AN
Telephone number	01524 791 530
E-mail	
Registered person	Little Dolphins Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Little Dolphins Pre-School opened in 1997 and is run by the pre-school committee. It operates from a classroom within Dolphinholme Church of England School, situated in a rural village south of Lancaster. The pre-school is registered to provide full day care for 16 children and currently has 19 children on roll. There are 18 children who are in receipt of funding for early education. The setting supports children who have English as an additional language and those who have a learning difficulty or disability.

The pre-school is open from 09.00 to 15.00 Monday to Friday during school term times.

Two staff work permanently with the children, and there are a further four staff available. All have relevant experience and training in early years. The setting receives support from the teacher team.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about good hygiene practices as they wash their hands after attending to their personal needs. They are beginning to understand the reasons why and the need to keep their hands clean as staff discuss germs with them. Children have their individual dietary needs met as the staff record all details and ensure all staff are fully aware of any issues. They enjoy a snack of toast and have milk or fresh water to drink and access the jugs of fresh water after playing outside, helping themselves to a drink.

The required documentation to keep children safe and to attend to their medical needs is in place and well maintained.

Children develop their physical skills as they play in the well planned outdoor area. They take part in a range of outdoor activities as they pretend to be in the lifeboat, putting on their lifejackets. They ride a variety of wheeled toys and show good control as they ride bikes, stopping, starting and changing direction as they learn to manage their large movements. They practise their fine motor skills as they competently use scissors and small tools with confidence and skill, to increase their hand and eye coordination.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very welcoming and safe environment. They enjoy playing in the well planned pre-school room accessing the areas of good provision including role play, construction and the book corner. They access the hall for lunch and for physical play and team games. They move freely and make good choices from the wide range of resources including computers, building blocks and crayons. However, the outdoor area has some drains that may pose a problem to children's safety.

There is sufficient space for the number of children who attend and regular risk assessments are carried out to ensure that the premises remain suitable for the purpose. Staff remind children to be careful and not to run and as a result they begin to take some responsibility for their own safety.

Children's welfare is further protected because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary, based on national and local guidance.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy and achieve, making good progress because staff have a good understanding of the early learning goals and the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They plan a good range of interesting activities which supports their learning as children delight in playing in the water and painting at the easel. The younger children are becoming competent learners as they are listened to and enjoy good social relationships with the staff and other children. They are supported as they play with activities provided at different levels to ensure their full participation

as they remain interested and motivated. The children are occupied and have fun as they play and learn in an interesting environment.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress because the staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage. They develop an interesting curriculum which gives equal weighting to the six areas of learning and provides a variation for the children. The children's individual learning needs are assessed regularly by their key worker and recorded to show their progress. Evaluation of all activities takes place to ensure these meet the individual needs of the children attending with the differentiation aspect covered in the planning. Although most staff promote children's learning through the asking of open ended questions, this is not a consistent approach by all staff.

Children are very interested and motivated to learn as they sit and complete their tasks, for example, the crayoning and the sticking. They are confident as they seek out new activities and initiate interaction with other people. They readily enter the nursery as they greet the staff and find something to do. They are becoming very independent as they pour their own drinks and manage their fastenings when getting ready to play outside. They have a good understanding of the setting's behavioural expectations, as they follow instructions to line up, listen and to tidy up. They learn about the community as they take part in planned activities and access resources including dressing up. They chatter to each other as they play and delight in discussing the activities they are taking part in. They talk about the train track and how the track needs to be built. They practise their writing skills as they access the mark making, pens and crayons to write their name and ascribe meaning to their marks. Some children are forming letters correctly when spelling their own name.

Children are developing their mathematical skills in a 'fun' manner because staff promote mathematical thinking through daily routines, including counting children at circle time, and make numbers an everyday occurrence. They learn about early calculations as they discuss the numbers before and after the number 10. Some children are very confident with numbers and count to 18 and above. They use their imagination as they act out roles in the home corner, making tea and putting babies to bed. They delight in exploring painting materials as they express their thoughts onto paper and create their own masterpieces. They enjoy making collages and use gluing materials, which they use extremely well, as they make models in three-dimensional images. Children play and learn in a well planned and interesting environment in which they can make choices and have fun.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are valued and welcomed into the setting and take part in all activities and access all areas of play. They are able to engage fully in all purposeful activities because staff ensure all have an equal opportunity, through the areas of continuous provision. Children learn to manage their behaviour, which is good, because staff use positive strategies and act as good role models encouraging children by the effective use of praise. They discuss the behaviour with the child and support children by being enthusiastic when children succeed, for example, 'well done', 'wow! that's excellent', which enables children to develop their self-esteem and feelings of self-worth. Staff talk very calmly and reinforce rules as they give gentle reminders, for example, 'don't run you may fall', and 'shall we tidy up the toys'.

Partnership with parents and carers is good and contributes to children's well-being. Parents are provided with a detailed brochure informing them about the care provided and the Foundation Stage. They are provided with newsletters regarding changes at the group, topic areas and current themes. Parents learn about their child's development through discussion and the folders of work completed by their child. They are involved in their child's learning by bringing items in from home and taking the reading books home. This ensures children's individual needs are met and a good link is made with the home.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered as they learn about the community and other cultures, as they engage in good activities which promote their understanding of diversity. They enthusiastically play together and learn to share as they wait their turn to tell their news at circle time. They learn about the world as they play with a variety of resources and take part in activities which celebrate people's differences and enjoy celebrating festivals from their own and other cultures.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The staff make good use of time, space and resources, which allows children to make choices and organise their own play. The required ratios are maintained and training qualifications are met to support children's learning. The records, policies and procedures required to maintain the safe management of the setting are in place, well maintained and up to date. The policies and procedures are currently being updated to improve the care and education of the children. Meetings are held to discuss the setting's provision for children and to monitor children's progress in order to inform future planning.

The leadership and management is good. The manager is committed to meeting the individual needs of the children. The manager is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the setting and encourages training for all staff to improve their skills and, therefore, the care of the children. Staff are fully aware of their roles and work well together as a team. She acts as a good role model for staff, by working closely with them, and promotes the care and education of all children.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting was asked to ensure that at least one member of staff working in the pre-school has a current first aid certificate and to review the policy and procedure documents to ensure that they accurately reflect the practice in the pre-school. The staff have now attended a recognised first aid course. The documents have been amended to reflect the pre-school practice. The above action enables the appropriate first aid treatment to be administered should a situation occur where this is needed. The changing of the documentation to reflect the pre-school clearly identifies those policies and procedures necessary for the safe running of the setting and the protection of children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- make sure the outdoor area, in regard to the drains, is suitable and safe for children to play out.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure all staff continue the practice of asking open ended questions to promote children's thinking and learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk